

## **The King in The Manger**

### **Luke 2:1-15**

The Christian faith is not a philosophy. It is not just a set of ideas. It is rooted in real historical events: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

We can be so familiar with the accounts of Jesus' birth that they lose their wonder. May that wonder break upon all of our hearts afresh.

#### **A Tale of Three Kings**

The obvious king is Caesar Augustus. The known world lies under his power. The second king is David. But his royal line had fallen, and power in the land lay with Rome. The third king appears the weakest and most vulnerable of them all: Jesus, King of the Jews, born into poverty in Bethlehem.

But Micah the prophet saw it coming. And whilst on the surface it seemed that Caesar was controlling events, underneath it was the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth who was working out his plans to see his Son born in Bethlehem.

The baby Mary and Joseph wrapped and put in the manger was no other than the eternal Son of God. So of these three kings, he was the one with the real power. Yet he had humbled himself completely. Possessing power is not what matters, it's how you use it.

#### **A Story of Great Joy**

This birth exceeded every other birth. The prophet Isaiah foresaw that God's people could have hope in the darkness of the world because a child would be born – because of who that child is: the Wonderful Counsellor and Mighty God.

But there's hope, not just because of who he is, but because of why he's come. Jesus humbled himself to the poverty of the stable to rescue us. When you know you need saving, and you know you can't save yourself, but your king has come to do it for you, it fills your heart with joy. But as joy comes, something else goes.

#### **The Answer to Your Fears**

There is a contrast between what is going on in the stable and what is going on in the field with the shepherds. In the stable, the King of Kings is born unnoticed, into poverty. In the field, the angels and the glory of God is overwhelming the shepherds.

In response, the shepherds are filled with fear. But in the birth of Christ, God has done something that can finally deal with our fears. Mary and Joseph had every reason to feel anxious, fearful and at the mercy of events. They weren't. And the events of Christmas tell us that there are no mistakes, no chance happenings. Our heavenly Father always knows what he is doing, even when it feels like nothing is working out. That can give you a real sense of security.

But that message of good news did not come to the elite, it came to shepherds. Nothing changes. The message is only good news of great joy if we realise we are not the king in the story, but humble ourselves to receive him as king. Any we all receive him, as king, with joy.